



Somaliland Mission, USA

U.S. House Armed Services Committee Calls for Stronger Security Partnership with Somaliland

National Defense Authorization Act Signals Growing Consensus on U.S.-Somaliland Ties

WASHINGTON, DC (July 7, 2022) – The Republic of Somaliland commends today's action by the U.S. House Armed Services Committee to advance a stronger security partnership between the U.S. and Somaliland. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2023 recognizes U.S. interests in "preserving and expanding stability with the help of democratic partners" such as Somaliland and directs the Department of Defense to examine the feasibility of a stronger security partnership between the U.S. and Somaliland. In its [guidance](#), the Committee instructs the Defense Department to explore and report on multiple areas of cooperation, including intelligence sharing, joint military exercises and training, and maritime operations, among others.

This guidance closely aligns with the principles of the Somaliland Partnership Act, which was approved by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier this month, and indicates growing bipartisan agreement that official engagement between Somaliland and the U.S. will be beneficial to both countries. The report language was proposed by Representative Marc Veasey (D-Texas), who co-chairs the Congressional Black Caucus Foreign Affairs & National Security Task Force.

"The Republic of Somaliland expresses its deep appreciation to the U.S. House Armed Services Committee for taking steps to bring about a stronger partnership between the U.S. and Somaliland," Bashir Goth, Somaliland Representative to the United States, said. "Led in this effort by Representative Marc Veasey, the members of the House Armed Services Committee have joined their colleagues in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in calling for pragmatic steps to explore opportunities for greater security cooperation with Somaliland. The inclusion of this provision in the U.S. Congress' annual national security guidance to the Department of Defense demonstrates a growing bicameral consensus that strengthened ties between Somaliland and the United States will help bolster stability and security in the Horn of Africa and beyond. We thank our friends in the House of Representatives for their continued efforts to engage with Somaliland and look forward to the future expansion of the U.S.-Somaliland partnership."

This legislation follows a string of recent efforts to strengthen relations between Somaliland and the United States. In March, Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi conducted a diplomatic visit to Washington during which he met with Members of Congress and officials from the White House, State Department, Defense Department and other agencies. Following these consultations, General Stephen Townsend, Commander of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), and U.S. Ambassador Larry André visited Somaliland, where they toured the Port of Berbera and the Berbera International Airport after meeting with President Bihi and members of his cabinet.

The full text from the [Committee report](#) on The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2023 follows below:

Security Partnership with Somaliland

The committee notes that increased United States engagement in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea region has presented an opportunity to strengthen security cooperation and partnership with Somaliland.

The committee notes that while the United States does not recognize Somaliland as an independent state, Somaliland occupies a pivotal geographic location in the Horn of Africa and is adjacent to strategic maritime routes in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and Somaliland has shared interests and assets that could contribute to U.S. military objectives and provide flexibility given the evolving security situation in the region. Due to these shared interests, a 50-person U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) survey team visited Somaliland in August 2021 to inspect the Port of Berbera, its adjacent airport, and related infrastructure, observe maritime security operations, and consult with relevant authorities. Subsequently, a visit to the United States by senior Somaliland officials and a visit to Somaliland by Commander, USAFRICOM, deepened mutual interest for cooperating to secure shared interests. Given such engagement, changes to U.S. defense posture in the region, and U.S. interests in preserving and expanding stability with the help of democratic partners, the committee directs the Secretary of Defense to provide a report to the House Committee on Armed Services by May 31, 2023, with recommendations for expanding the security partnership with Somaliland and its potential contributions to U.S. military objectives in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea region. This report should examine a range of areas for possible cooperation, including port access, military training, joint exercises, and intelligence sharing that can promote regional stability, enhance maritime and border security, and assist in deterring the trafficking of humans, wildlife, weapons, and illicit goods.

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